

2017 Northern Rockies Annual Operating Plan

PREDICTIVE SERVICES/LAND AGENCIES – SERVICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Northern Rockies Predictive Services Unit resides at the Northern Rockies Coordination Center. The interagency coordination center's primary mission is to provide resource support for the functional areas of overhead, crews, aircraft, supplies and equipment to the field for wildland fire and other emergency operations. The PSU will provide daily, medium-range, and long-range fire weather, fire danger, and resource outlooks for use in tactical and strategic planning. These outlooks will complement forecast products provided by the NWS.

A. Operational Support and Predictive Services

Predictive Services will produce a suite of products tailored to the tactical and strategic mission of the land management agencies within the Northern Rockies. While the main area of responsibility is at the geographic area level, Predictive Services will provide services to sub-units of the geographic area, such as dispatch centers and local administrative units. Contributions will also be made to the national level Predictive Services program. The Northern Rockies Predictive Services products can be found off the Northern Rockies Coordination Center's website (<https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc>), in the Predictive Services tab on the left.

1. Daily Fire Weather Map

The Daily Fire Weather Map is a text-and-graphics product which summarizes expected fire weather conditions for the next 24-hours. Fire behavior forecasts will be included when a Fire Behavior Analyst is assigned to Predictive Services at the coordination center.

The Daily Fire Weather Map will be issued every day – Monday through Friday and on weekends during critical fire periods beginning early June and continuing through September 30. Seasonal start and stop dates may vary upon existing or expected fire danger or activity. The forecast should be issued and posted to the internet by 2:00 pm MDT each day. Updates will be made when it appears that observed or expected conditions are significantly different than those contained in the product.

2. 7-Day Significant Fire Potential Outlook

The 7-Day Significant Fire Potential Outlook addresses the probability of new large fires for each Predictive Services Area (PSA) across the Northern Rockies for each of the next 7 days. The outlook will identify significant fire potential in a 3-category scale based on ERCs and 100-hour fuel moisture forecasts. Fire triggers (i.e., lightning, wind, etc.) will be incorporated to refine the potential on individual days. The outlook will be issued every morning – Monday through Friday and on weekends during critical fire periods - by 0930 MST/MDT, beginning early June and continuing through September 30. Seasonal start and stop dates may vary upon existing or expected fire danger or activity. Updates will be made when it appears

that observed or expected conditions are significantly different than those contained in the product. 7-Day Outlooks will be archived each day for the 2017 fire season. More information on the 7-Day Outlook can be found on the Northern Rockies PSU website.

3. Monthly Fire Potential Outlook

The Monthly Fire Potential Outlook is a broader, more general assessment of weather, climate, and fuels conditions across the area. It incorporates climate trends, potential weather, and fuel conditions and trends to make long-term predictions of impacts on fire business. Outlooks will focus on potential for large fire activity and time frames that will impact resource availability and mobilization relative to normal fire business for the time of year. The Monthly outlook will be issued no later than 2 business days prior to the start of the month for which it is valid. Monthly outlooks will be produced by the Predictive Services National Office for the 2017 Fire Season, following the same general format.

4. Seasonal Fire Potential Outlook

The Seasonal Outlook is similar to the Monthly, except for a longer time period. This outlook attempts to predict the overall character of the upcoming fire season relative to a normal season (based on 5 to 10 year historical averages). The Seasonal is issued in the late winter or early spring prior to the onset of the fire season, and is updated as needed. Update times are not fixed but depend on such factors as winter snowpack, onset and progress of snow melt, weather trends, fuels condition and trends, etc. Seasonal Outlooks will be produced by the Predictive Services National Office for the 2017 Fire Season, following the same general format.

B. Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS)

When an observation is identified as unrepresentative, notify the Northern Rockies Predictive Services meteorologist to initiate maintenance or repair of the station in question. Predictive Services will relay information regarding the network, address issues and concerns, and offer recommendations for improvements, to the USDA Forest Service Regional RAWS coordinator and to the BLM-NIFC RAWS Program manager, as appropriate.

C. Land Management Liaison

Predictive Services meteorologists will act as a liaison on issues regarding weather, climate, and fuels between land management agency partners and service providers in the Northern Rockies. These include the NWS, fire management units and committees, and the research community.

D. Monitoring, Feedback, and Improvement of Fire Weather Information

Land management agencies will monitor all sources of fire weather information to ensure quality, consistency, and applicability. When significant issues arise, Predictive Services will address the issue with the service provider to enhance awareness and to work toward an appropriate solution.

E. Predictive Services will work to integrate advanced technology into analytical and prediction systems for use in fire management planning and operations. This will include regional numerical modeling, weather and fuels data assimilation and dissemination, and continued research and development in fire meteorology.

F. Incident Response

The NWS is the sole provider of Incident Meteorologists (IMETs). Predictive Services meteorologists will collaborate as needed with both the local NWS forecast offices and the IMETs to maintain GACC- wide forecast message consistency.

G. Contact and Location Information:

The Northern Rockies Predictive Service Unit is located at 5765 West Broadway, Missoula MT 59808-9361. The Predictive Service Meteorologists can be reached by telephone at (406) 329-4703 or (406) 329-4875.